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OLC CIRANO

OLC#78-2847/1  
2 August 1978*Covert Action*

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Briefing of House International Relations  
Subcommittee on International Security and  
Scientific Affairs on the [ ] Presidential  
Finding

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1. [ ] On 2 August 1978 the Subcommittee on International Security and Scientific Affairs of the House International Relations Committee was briefed on the [ ] Presidential Finding with respect to covert action. The briefing took place in H-236, of the Capitol. The room was swept before the briefing and monitored throughout. The briefing lasted from 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. The material covered during the briefing was at the Secret/Sensitive level and a transcript was taken.

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2. [ ] Present from the Subcommittee were:

Clement J. Zablocki (D., Wis.), Chairman

Jonathan B. Bingham (D., N.Y.)  
Gerry E. Studds (D., Mass.)

William S. Broomfield (R., Mich.)  
Larry Winn (R., Kan.)

Representative Lee H. Hamilton (D., Ind.), from the full Committee, was also in attendance. Jack Brady, Chief of Staff of the full Committee, was the only staff member to attend. Representative Studds arrived late, and Chairman Zablocki and Representatives Broomfield, Winn, and Hamilton left before the completion of the briefing.

3. [ ] John McMahon, DDO, was the principal witness. He was accompanied by [ ] C/IAD/CAS, Frederick Hitz, Legislative Counsel, and [ ] Associate Legislative Counsel.

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4. [ ] After opening remarks by the Chairman concerning the sensitivities involved in the subject matter of the briefing and a request that all members hold the information received in the highest of confidence, John McMahon then read the prepared statement. At the conclusion of his preliminary remarks and

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before reading the Finding and commenting thereon, Mr. McMahon requested and received permission to go off the record to discuss details of each of the covert action programs as well as permission to review the transcript for purposes of sanitization at the conclusion of the briefing. Mr. McMahon then proceeded to read the prepared statement. At the conclusion of the reading of Item #11 of the worldwide Finding, Chairman Zablocki, Representative Broomfield, and Staff Chief Jack Brady left the briefing. Representative Bingham then chaired the session.

25X1 5. [ ] At the conclusion of the reading of the prepared statement, Representative Bingham said that he appreciated very much the candor with which the briefing was given. He added, however, that the presentation indicated that the material was considerably condensed and stated that he hoped the Subcommittee could receive a more detailed briefing at a later date. He then asked questions regarding the meaning of the use of the words "task" and "Perspectives," which were answered. He then asked why no comprehensive Finding had been signed between January, 1975 and the present date. At this point, Representative Hamilton left the briefing. Mr. Bingham asked additional questions concerning the meaning of the terms "unconventional warfare," "exposed," and "counter," which were adequately explained by Mr. McMahon.

25X1 6. [ ] Representative Winn then asked for additional detail on the paramilitary portion of the Finding and more background [ ] At this point, the remaining members (Studds, Bingham, and Winn) left the briefing to vote on the floor. Only Representatives Studds and Bingham returned. 25X1

25X1 7. [ ] Mr. Studds then asked to have the portion of the prepared statement that he had missed reread. He then commented that communications between the Congress as a whole and CIA, in his opinion, were not as good as they should be but laid most of the blame at the feet of Congress. He then related a story of how he had asked when he first came to Congress six years ago who in Congress was aware of CIA activities and discovered that nobody really knew. He also asked questions as to what Committees receive reports on covert action Findings and what Committees we now reported to concerning all activities of CIA. He then asked whether future covert action briefings would only be given the Subcommittee when a new Presidential Finding was signed or whether there would be periodic reviews of all covert action programs for the Subcommittee. This question was answered to the effect that that depended on the Committee's desires.

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9. [redacted] There were no follow-up questions. After the briefing, the undersigned worked with the reporter to insure that he was aware of what should and should not be included in the transcript. He was also given copies of the Presidential Finding and the prepared statement for his use in preparing the transcript. These documents will be returned with the transcript and will not be out of the control of the security officer who escorted the reporter.

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[redacted]  
Associate Legislative Counsel

cc: DDO  
C/IAD/CAS

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